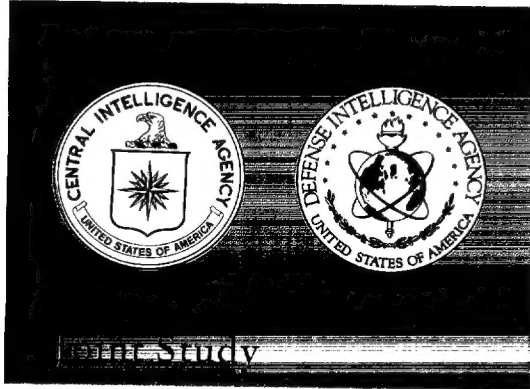


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Weekly Survey of Communist Military Developments in Indochina

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27 February 1974

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27 February 1974

Fifty-Second Report

**WEEKLY SURVEY OF COMMUNIST MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS
IN INDOCHINA***

(This report covers the period
from 21 through 26 February)

The Key Points

- Troop infiltration was maintained at a steady pace during the period, as three regular groups were detected moving south -- two destined for the COSVN area and one bound for the central highlands.
- Logistic activity in North Vietnam continued at a normal, high dry season level, while in Laos and South Vietnam photography showed only moderate truck traffic along the main supply corridors.
- Major elements of an NVA antiaircraft artillery regiment probably have relocated from Quang Tri Province to Quang Binh Province in North Vietnam. Advanced elements of an NVA artillery regiment that formerly operated in northern Laos have been detected in northern MR 1.
- The Communists are building a new north-south road through Pleiku and Darlac Provinces of South Vietnam, paralleling the Route 14 corridor.

* This report, which replaces the weekly **Communist Violations of the Vietnam and Laos Settlement Agreements and Related Developments**, has been prepared jointly by the Central Intelligence Agency and the Department of Defense.

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Preface

This report is the fifty-second in a series summarizing evidence received during the reporting period of (I) Communist efforts to infiltrate new manpower and military supplies toward and into South Vietnam, (II) significant Communist combat activity, and (III) other developments affecting Communist military capabilities in Indochina.

DETAILS

I. Infiltration and Redeployments of North Vietnamese Personnel and Military Supplies

Personnel Infiltration

1. The North Vietnamese continued to send troops south last week, as three new regular infiltration groups were detected moving through Binh Tram (BT) 8 near Vinh, North Vietnam. Two of the groups, with about 1,100 troops, are destined for the COSVN area, and the third, comprising more than 500 troops, is en route to the B-3 Front -- the first noted moving to this area in about three weeks. Based on "gap-filling," another undetected group with an estimated strength of 500 troops is believed to have started, or soon will start, to the B-3 Front. This group, as well as the three groups observed moving south in the infiltration pipeline, have been included in our compilation of troops starting south during the 1973-74 regular infiltration cycle (see the table below). In addition, two new special-purpose groups were detected at BT 8 during the past week -- one destined for VC MR 5 on the central coast and the other en route to the COSVN area.

**Comparative Starts of Troops
from North Vietnam, by Destination
1 September - 26 February**

	1972-73	1973-74
Total	78,500	54,000
MR Tri-Thien-Hue	19,500	2,000
MR 5	9,000	3,000
B-3 Front	14,000	6,500
COSVN	25,000	20,000
Southern Laos/MR 559	11,000	22,500

2. Thus far in February, 15 regular infiltration groups with some 8,000 troops have started toward or have been committed to infiltrate South Vietnam. This rate is consistent with a 30 January message from BT 8 instructing its subordinate elements to prepare to receive, process, and transport "one group every two days and in some instances daily." On the other hand, the 7,000 troops starting toward the B-3 Front and COSVN is substantially below the monthly rate of about 11,000 forecast for these areas in a North Vietnamese message last November.

Redeployments

Impending Arrival of New Artillery Regiment in Northern MR 1

3. COMINT throughout February revealed advance elements of the North Vietnamese 16th Artillery Regiment in northern MR 1. The regiment previously operated in the DMZ area in 1969 and in northern Laos from mid-1970 to early 1972, when it was involved in the heavy shelling of Long Tieng in the Plaine des Jarres area. The unit has not been located since then, however, and it may have been operating in North Vietnam. The arrival of the 16th Regiment, which is believed to have 122-mm and 130-mm artillery pieces, would further augment Communist firepower in northern MR 1. There are currently five artillery regiments in Quang Tri Province and one in Thua Thien Province.

Major Elements of the 284th NVA AAA Regiment Withdraw from Quang Tri Province

4. [redacted] major elements of the 284th Antiaircraft Artillery (AAA) Regiment may have recently relocated from Quang Tri Province to southern Quang Binh Province in North Vietnam. The regiment has been in South Vietnam since 1972, and the probable withdrawal of at least two of its battalions could reflect the unit's need to rest, refit, and undergo additional training. Although elements of the 284th Regiment apparently have departed, there has been no reduction in the threat to South Vietnamese aircraft flying in northern South Vietnam in recent weeks. Earlier this month, major elements of the 246th AAA Regiment were detected moving from Quang Binh Province, North Vietnam, to Quang Tri Province (see last week's report). The moves by elements of the 284th and 246th Regiments suggest that the North Vietnamese are currently rotating some of their air defense units in this area.

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NVA 174th Regiment Returns to MR 3

5. The 174th Infantry Regiment of the NVA 5th Division has relocated from MR 2 to MR 3. The return of the regiment to its former area of operation in Tay Ninh Province [redacted]

[redacted] The regiment had deployed to MR 2's Quang Duc Province last December as part of a task force of some 5,000 troops sent from MR 3 to help counter the threat from the South Vietnamese 23rd Infantry Division and to secure the Communists' strategic supply route through the province. With the pullback of major elements of the 23rd Division to Darlac Province in January, the threat to Communist

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positions in Quang Duc apparently has been sufficiently reduced to permit the withdrawal of the 174th. This redeployment represents about a 1,000-man reduction in Communist forces in MR 2 and a similar augmentation in MR 3 (see the map on Communist and South Vietnamese combat forces in South Vietnam).

Movement of Military Equipment and Supplies

North Vietnam

6. Logistic activity in central North Vietnam remained at a normal, high dry season level during the reporting period. One storage area north of Vinh reportedly handled some 400 tons of ordnance during [redacted] while another storage area reported that it had nearly 350 tons waiting to be shipped. [redacted] continued supply shipments from Vinh westward along Route 7 for Communist forces in northern Laos. [redacted], 30 tons of supplies, including small amounts of ordnance, were moved westward along Route 7, while the following day another 80 tons were dispatched. Farther south, in the area between Quang Khe and the DMZ, no significant logistic activity was noted.

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7. Most of the ordnance identified moving through the system during this period consisted of ammunition for small arms, antiaircraft artillery pieces, and mortars. Only 10 tons of ammunition for heavy field artillery pieces (122-mm and 130-mm) were detected. [redacted]

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[redacted] where only a small proportion -- less than 10% -- of the ammunition identified has been for heavy field artillery pieces. Moreover, a large part of the 130-mm ammunition that has been shipped from the Vinh area -- about 250 tons -- has been destined for Communist units in northern Laos. The shipment of only small quantities of heavy field artillery ammunition is consistent with the level of activity in South Vietnam. During the past year the Communists have used their heavy artillery pieces very sparingly and do not need large shipments to maintain their stocks.

Laos

8. [redacted] only light to moderate truck activity. Following the pattern established last week, an average of less than 50 trucks was observed moving south daily, although on most days only sections of the main north-south supply corridor were covered. [redacted]

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[redacted] The only significant supply shipment detected by this source occurred [redacted] when a logistics unit reported that 34 vehicles carrying rice and building materials had been received. The unit also stated that it was expecting to receive another 115 trucks shortly.

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Communist and South Vietnamese Regular Combat Forces in South Vietnam

South Vietnam

Regular Combat Forces

		MR 1	
VC/NVA ¹	RVNAF ²	VC/NVA ¹	RVNAF ²
186,000	372,000	86,000	103,000
	325th		VNMC
	324B		Airborne
	304th		1st
	711th		2nd
	2nd ³		3rd
	673rd AAA		Regional Forces

1. Includes VC/NVA personnel in ground combat, combat support, and air defense units and local force companies and platoons.

2. RVNAF Ground Order of Battle. Includes assigned personnel in ARVN/VNMC ground combat and combat support units, and Regional Force battalions. Although present for duty strength is no longer available, it is estimated to be about 85% of assigned strength.

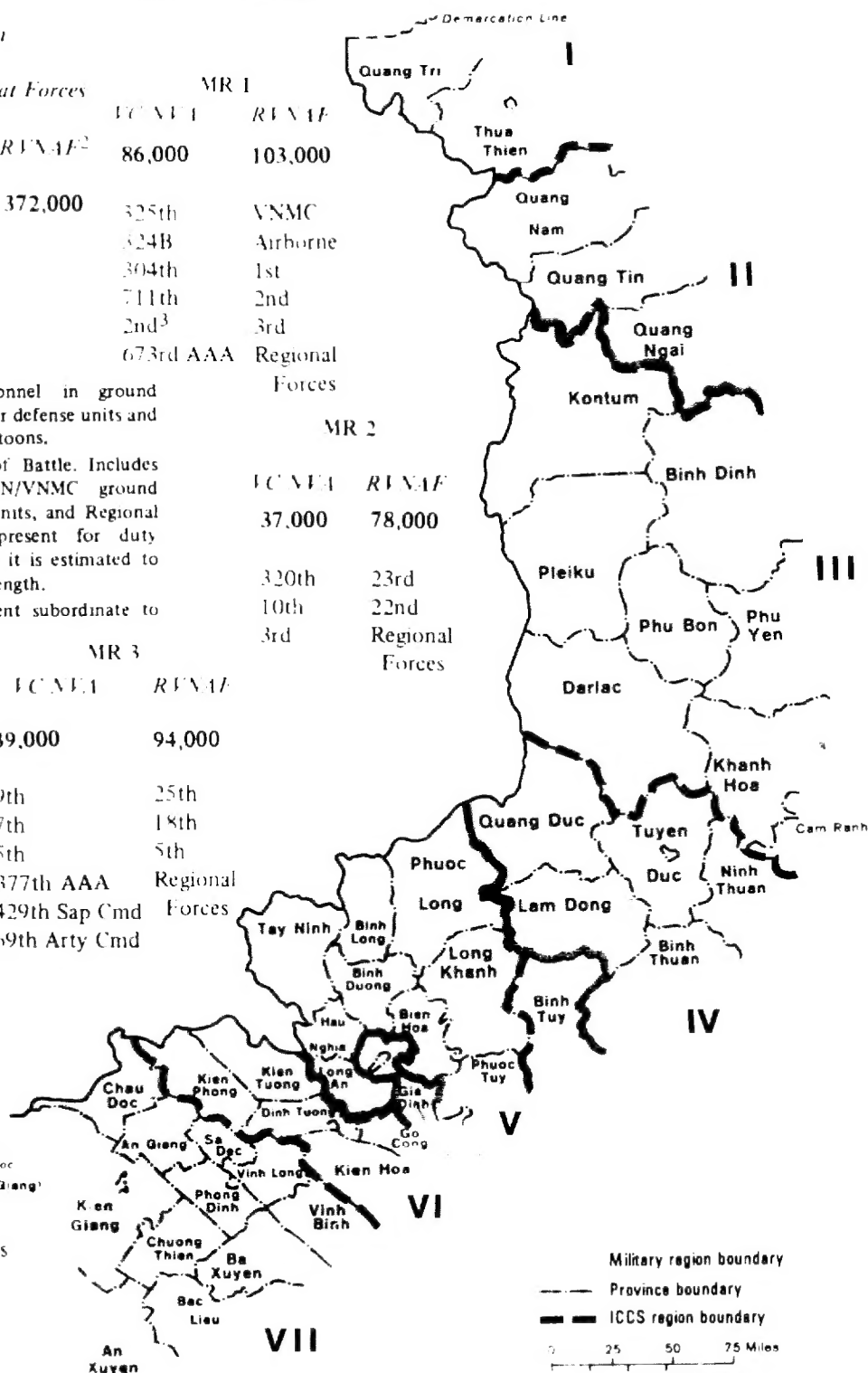
3. Only one infantry regiment subordinate to the division.

MR 3

VC/NVA	RVNAF
39,000	94,000
9th	25th
7th	18th
5th	5th
377th AAA	Regional Forces
429th Sap Cmd	
69th Arty Cmd	

MR 4

VC/NVA	RVNAF
24,000	97,000
1st ³	21st
	9th
	7th
	Regional Forces



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South Vietnam

9. [] Route 9 and Communist Route 14 in northern South Vietnam [] showed these roads to be in good condition and capable of sustaining heavy traffic. Coverage of Route 9 from Dong Ha to the Laotian border indicates that all bridges along this road are usable and that the major storage areas at Cam Lo adjacent to Route 9 are receiving extensive use, suggesting that substantial quantities of supplies are moving along this road into Laos. However, only small truck convoys, usually less than 5 trucks, were observed moving.

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10. South of Khe Sanh along Communist Route 14, photography also showed only small truck convoys. Like Route 9, the roads in the area appear to be capable of supporting much heavier levels of truck activity

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II. Significant Communist Combat Activity

11. Combat activity in South Vietnam remained high during the past week, with a daily average incident rate of over 100. This represents a slight decline from the previous week, which had witnessed the greatest number of cease-fire violations in 1974. The activity continues to be centered in the Delta (MR 4) and consists primarily of low-level ground contacts and attacks-by-fire. A few heavy clashes have recently occurred in the U Minh forest, however, as a result of ARVN sweep operations into this Communist-controlled area.

III. Other Developments Affecting Communist Military Capabilities in Indochina

Communists Expanding Roadnet in Western Highlands

12. Aerial photography [] shows that Communist road crews are building a new north-south route paralleling the Route 14 corridor through Pleiku and Darlac Provinces, South Vietnam. About 43 miles of recently graded single-lane construction aligned along the Cambodian-South Vietnamese border about five miles from Route 14 were observed on the photography (see the transportation map). []

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13. The new road probably will be extended another 26 miles northward to join Route 19 and another 9 miles farther south to connect with the recently completed single-lane road which joins Communist Route 14 with Route 14 in Cambodia. It probably is being built to provide security for the Route 14 corridor and to function as an alternative route in the event that ARVN operations to interdict Route 14 succeed.



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